# THE GREAT DEBATE

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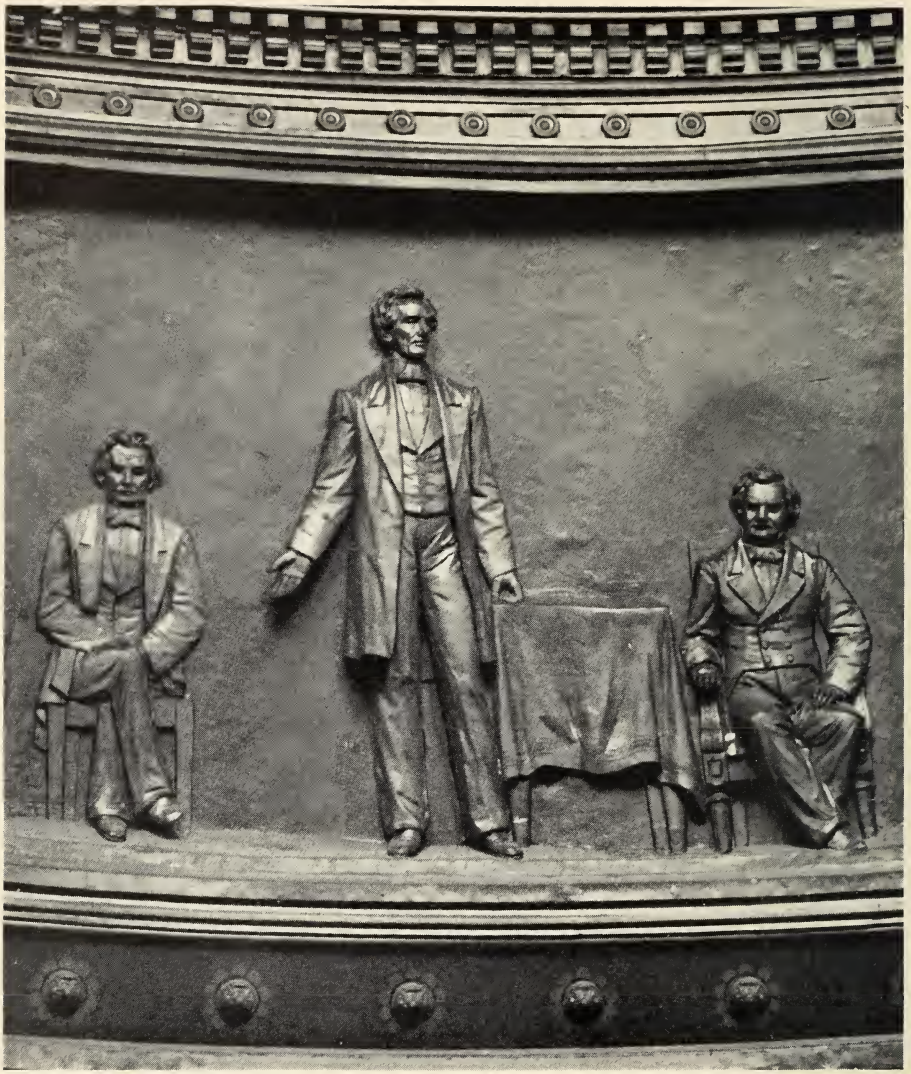

*What has been described by the Secretary of State of Illinois as "the most artistic piece of decoration" in the Capitol at Springfield is a series of bas reliefs by F. Nicolai at the base of the inner dome of that imposing building. One panel in this frieze represents a scene in "the Great Debate." In the portion of that panel shown here Stephen A. Douglas sits across the table from Abraham Lincoln, and the figure next to Lincoln has been identified as Stephen T. Logan.*

# The Great Debate

*between*

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

*and*

STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS

*in 1858*

*Reproduced in Condensed Form in 1940*

BY

HARRY F. LAKE

AND

GEORGE R. FARNUM

*before The Lincoln Group of Boston*

THE LINCOLN GROUP OF BOSTON

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# *Foreword*

On November 16, 1940, the Lincoln Group of Boston reproduced in abbreviated form the series of joint debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas in the Illinois campaign of 1858 for a seat in the United States Senate. In that famous forensic duel the debaters met seven times between August 21 and October 15. They alternated in opening speeches of one hour, "middle speeches" of an hour and a half, and rejoinders of a half-hour. Speaking in widely separated places, under the conditions of that distant time, much repetition was necessary. By taking advantage of that fact, and omitting many matters of local and temporary interest, the Group debaters were able to present in two hours major portions of the arguments of permanent interest and importance — using throughout *the words of Lincoln and Douglas themselves,** with the exception of a few connectives and minor explanatory phrases. With rare skill the Group debaters chose their selections and these they presented with dramatic force to an enthusiastic audience. A State Supreme Court Judge pronounced the result to have been "illuminating." The Group understands that no other Lincoln association has done this before.

The text used is that edited by Dr. Edwin Erle Sparks, and published in 1908 by the Illinois State Historical Library. For saving space the numerous references to "cheers" and "laughter" are omitted. Professor Arthur M. Schlesinger, of Harvard University, in the name of Ninian W. Edwards, served as Moderator. It will be remembered that the Legislature returned Douglas to the Senate for another term, although Lincoln carried the popular vote.

* Certain eccentricities of style represent the original text.

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# *THE GREAT DEBATE*

# *Historical Introduction*

BY F. LAURISTON BULLARD

AT intervals during the entire history of our country from the beginning of governmental operations under a Constitution until the outbreak of the Civil War, the slavery question was as constantly present in the minds of all Americans, and the dark shadow of dread hovered as continually over the lives of the whole people, as is the case with the world war of today.

Climate and the plantation system rooted slavery enduringly in the South. Before the end of the 18th century Eli Whitney's invention made cotton the staple industry of half the United States. The idea became fixed in the minds of a large and influential portion of the Southern population that the future prosperity and happiness of their section depended upon the permanence of what they called their "peculiar institution." They evolved a pro-slavery theory of society which marched with their political doctrine of State sovereignty. Able and devout men demonstrated from the Old and New Testaments that slavery was a valid system and that classical civilization had been based upon it. Abraham Lincoln always assessed upon the North a part of the responsibility for the existence and persistence of slavery in this country.

The Constitutional Convention having decided that representation in the popular branch of the Federal legislature

should be in ratio with population had then to define the term. Did "population" include slaves? On the ground that the labor of five slaves was equivalent to the labor of three white men, the Continental Congress had assessed the expenses of the Revolutionary War by adding to the quotas of the States an amount equal to three-fifths of the number of slaves in each, and the Convention adopted that ratio for determining the representation of the States in Congress and for the assessment of direct taxes. Further, it was agreed that the slave trade should not be prohibited prior to 1808, and that a tax of ten dollars should be imposed on each slave imported.

Early in our National existence slavery became increasingly an economic issue and the balancing of the two sections became a political issue of the first magnitude. In the Senate, where every State must have two members, the balance could be kept by admitting Northern and Southern States at the same time. In the House, where population determined representation, the balance could not be maintained. The great trek beyond the Alleghenies was well under way long before 1820. The migrants were very unevenly distributed between the sections. In the 1810–1820 decade Ohio gained population at a rate two-and-one-half times that of Tennessee, and Illinois three-and-one-half times that of Mississippi, yet Mississippi and Illinois had been admitted simultaneously. How could the balance be preserved even in the Senate when demands for admission were multiplying far faster North than South? When the Constitution became operative seven States obviously were destined for free labor leaving six for slave labor. The North started one to the good. Vermont and Kentucky came in together, then Ohio and Tennessee, Indiana and Louisiana, Illinois and Mississippi. Alabama demanded admission in

1819. At almost the same time Maine and Missouri applied for admission. There followed the first of the great sectional debates ending with the Missouri Compromise.

With the admission of Alabama there were eleven States North and eleven South, but the Northern States had 105 Congressmen while the Southern States had only 81. When the vast domain known as the Louisiana Purchase was acquired Congress did not disturb slavery as it had existed under French and Spanish Law. It was assumed that Missouri would come in as a slave State and its proposed constitution so provided. But a New York Congressman offered an amendment to the admission bill, prohibiting the introduction of additional slaves into the Territory and providing that children of slave parents later born in Missouri should be free at the age of twenty-five. The House accepted, but the Senate rejected, the Amendment. There was a Congressional election in 1818, and a Presidential election in 1820. In both the Missouri question was fiercely debated. The new Congress was completely engrossed with the subject. Then Henry Clay, Speaker of the House, earned his title of "The Great Pacificator." A joint committee of Senate and House, organized at his suggestion, adopted certain proposals offered during the debate which Clay now endorsed. Both Houses accepted them. President Monroe signed the bill on March 2, 1821. Missouri entered the Union as a slave State. Its southern boundary, roughly equivalent to the southern boundaries of Virginia and Kentucky, the latitude of 36° 30′, extended westward from Missouri, was to be the dividing line between slave and non-slave territory. After two and one-half years of turmoil there ensued a period of relative peace which lasted for a generation.

But there came a war. The United States annexed the independent Republic of Texas. Mexico, defeated, ceded Cal-

ifornia and New Mexico. A cluster of new Territories sought admission. John C. Calhoun, of South Carolina, saw the balance of power veering toward the free States. He argued that equilibrium could be maintained only if all the territory acquired from Mexico, including that north of 36° 30′, be left at liberty to adopt or reject slavery as their people might choose. That was Popular Sovereignty. It meant the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Oregon, not a part of the Mexican cession, was organized as a free Territory. The discovery of gold in California caused a rush of population to the far coast. A furious debate again arose with northern abolitionists and southern fire-eaters fanning the flames.

The aged Henry Clay was brought back from Kentucky for the express purpose of negotiating another compromise. His group of proposals reported to the Senate were embodied in the Omnibus Bill. Old Tom Benton and Daniel Webster endorsed them; Calhoun and Jefferson Davis assailed them. That was the final appearance on the national stage of the Great Triumvirate. Within a few weeks Calhoun died, and within two years Clay and Webster passed away. The story of the long struggle is as winding as the Mississippi River. Finally most of Clay's proposals were adopted. The Missouri Compromise line was left alone, yet California, half on each side of it, came in as a free State. Utah and New Mexico were organized as Territories without mention of slavery. The slave trade in the District of Columbia was abolished. A new and much stronger Fugitive Slave Law, which intensely exasperated the North, was adopted. And now this Compromise of 1850 was expected to settle the slavery question.

West of Missouri lay the vast region traversed by the Santa Fe and Oregon trails. In 1853 a bill was introduced

in the House for organizing it all as the Territory of Nebraska. The following year the chairman of the Senate Committee on Territories, Stephen A. Douglas, adopted the Popular Sovereignty policy, and offered a bill for the territorial organization of Kansas, west of Missouri, and of Nebraska, west of Iowa, with these provisions: That the people or their representatives adopt or reject slavery, and that all slave legal questions be left to the Supreme Court, with a definite annulment of the 36° 30′ Missouri Compromise. There followed a tremendous four months of debate. Douglas had against him Chase, Sumner, Seward, Ben Wade. He won. President Pierce signed the bill on May 24, 1854. No man in the nation loomed larger than Stephen A. Douglas. But his prediction that his Illinois constituents might mob him came near to realization. The Missouri Compromise had been repealed. Slavery could exist anywhere. On October 3 Douglas defended his course, in Springfield. The following night Abraham Lincoln answered him.

Three years more and the Supreme Court declared that the Missouri Compromise always had been unconstitutional. Dred Scott was a negro slave, owned by an army surgeon. The owner moved with Dred from the slave State of Missouri to the free State of Illinois, and thence to what now is Minnesota, then in the territory made free by the Missouri Compromise, and finally in 1838 back to Missouri. In 1846 Dred Scott sued in the Missouri Courts for his freedom, claiming that his residence in a free State and in free territory had liberated him. He lost. After seven years he began a new action in the Federal Court at St. Louis whence the case went to the final court in Washington. There it lay dormant for a long time, only to become suddenly a matter of enormous public interest in 1856. The

legal record of the case is very interesting and extremely complicated. Every one of the nine justices wrote an opinion. The majority opinion was delivered by a great Chief Justice, Roger B. Taney. Question: Could a Negro, whose ancestors were imported into the United States and sold as slaves, become a citizen under the Constitution, and as such be entitled to sue in the United States Courts? Answer, "No." Well, Dred Scott had lived for two years in territory declared by Congress to be free under the Missouri Compromise legislation. Did that restriction confer freedom on a slave? "No." Did Congress have any power to prohibit slavery in the Territories? "No." Why? The Territories are held by the government as a trustee for the people of the United States and for their equal benefit. Slaves are property. They are distinctly declared to be such in the Constitution. Nothing in the Constitution implies less protection for slave property than for any other kind of property. An owner may take his slaves anywhere in the Territories and any law that seeks to deprive him of that right is unconstitutional. The Missouri Compromise never was valid legislation.

Two days after the inauguration of James Buchanan that decision was handed down. In his Inaugural he intimated that there might soon be expected a ruling that he hoped would end the slavery agitation. He knew what it was going to be. Letters exist which show him to have received confidential information from a member of the Court.

Meantime a tragic drama was under way in Kansas. Should Kansas enter the Union bond or free? The Emigrant Aid societies of New England, the shipping of Sharpe's rifles to the territory to arm the free State men, the sack of Lawrence, so-called; the part played by John Brown of Osawatomie and Pottawatomie, are chapters in the story.

Two purported rival governments came into existence. The Lecompton Constitution was so called because it was adopted by the pro-slavery faction at their capital, named for the Territorial Chief Justice, Samuel D. Lecompte. It contained a clause recognizing the ownership of slaves then within the prospective State. The people might vote on the question whether they would accept the constitution with or without slavery, but no matter which way they voted the clause protecting slave property already there would stand. The Free Staters refused to vote on that document — it was "loaded" against them. When it came to Congress Douglas strongly opposed its approval. An attempt was made to attach to it a proviso, under what was called the English bill, that it go to the people with a guarantee of liberal land grants if they accepted it, and an indefinite delay of statehood if they did not. Buchanan wanted the State admitted on that basis. Douglas, most formidable of all Democratic candidates for the Presidency, broke with the Democratic President on that question. When Buchanan warned him that no Democrat ever was successful who opposed an Administration policy, the Illinois Senator looked him in the face, and said: "Sir, permit me most respectfully to remind you that General Jackson is dead." He stood absolutely on the platform of Popular Sovereignty, which meant that he defied the South. Why did he do that except on principle? The Administration newspaper, the "Washington Union," promptly read him out of the party.

This in broad outline is the background for the Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858. The Supreme Court had said slavery could not be excluded from the Territories. The Republican Party was founded on the thesis that there must be no extension of slavery into the Territories. The strategy of Lincoln must be to widen the split between the

Administration Democrats and the Douglas Democrats. Both men knew that the Senatorial election depended on the extent to which that strategy might succeed. The Missouri Compromise had been repealed four years before. The Dred Scott decision had been rendered one year and five months before. The "war" in Kansas was still going on. Lincoln had made his "House Divided" speech just sixty-six days before the first of the seven debates.

# *Opening Speech of Stephen A. Douglas*

BY GEORGE R. FARNUM

LADIES and Gentlemen: I appear before you today for the purpose of discussing the leading political topics which now agitate the public mind. By an arrangement between Mr. Lincoln and myself, we are present here today for the purpose of having a joint discussion, as the representatives of the two great political parties of the State and Union, upon the principles in issue between those parties, and this vast concourse of people shows the deep feeling which pervades the public mind in regard to the questions dividing us.

Prior to 1854 this country was divided into two great political parties, known as the Whig and Democratic parties. Both were national and patriotic, advocating principles that were universal in their application. An Old Line Whig could proclaim his principles in Louisiana and Massachusetts alike. Whig principles had no boundary sectional line; they were not limited by the Ohio River, nor by the Potomac, nor by the line of the Free and Slave States; but applied and were proclaimed wherever the Constitution ruled or the American flag waved over the American soil. So it was, and so it is with the great Democratic party, which, from the days of Jefferson until this period, has proven itself to be the historic party of this nation. While the Whig and Democratic parties differed in regard to a

bank, the tariff, distribution, the specie circular, and the sub-treasury, they agreed on the great slavery question which now agitates the Union. I say that the Whig party and the Democratic party agreed on this slavery question, while they differed on those matters of expediency to which I have referred. The Whig party and the Democratic party jointly adopted the Compromise measures of 1850 as the basis of a proper and just solution of this slavery question in all its forms. Clay was the great leader, with Webster on his right and Cass on his left, and sustained by the patriots in the Whig and Democratic ranks who had devised and enacted the Compromise measures of 1850.

In 1851 the Whig party and the Democratic party united in Illinois in adopting resolutions indorsing and approving the principles of the Compromise measures of 1850, as the proper adjustment of that question. In 1852, when the Whig party assembled in Convention at Baltimore for the purpose of nominating a candidate for the Presidency, the first thing it did was to declare the Compromise measures of 1850, in substance and in principle, a suitable adjustment of that question. . . . When the Democratic Convention assembled in Baltimore in the same year, for the purpose of nominating a Democratic candidate for the Presidency, it also adopted the Compromise measures of 1850 as the basis of Democratic action. Thus you see that up to 1853–54, the Whig party and the Democratic party both stood on the same platform with regard to the slavery question. That platform was the right of the people of each State and each Territory to decide their local and domestic institutions for themselves, subject only to the Federal Constitution.

During the session of Congress of 1853–54, I introduced into the Senate of the United States a bill to organize the

Territories of Kansas and Nebraska on that principle which had been adopted in the Compromise measures of 1850, approved by the Whig party and the Democratic party in Illinois in 1851, and indorsed by the Whig party and the Democratic party in National Convention in 1852. In order that there might be no misunderstanding in relation to the principle involved in the Kansas and Nebraska bill, I put forth the true intent and meaning of the Act in these words: "It is the true intent and meaning of this Act not to legislate slavery into any State or Territory, or to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Federal Constitution." Thus you see that up to 1854, when the Kansas and Nebraska bill was brought into Congress for the purpose of carrying out the principles which both parties had up to that time indorsed and approved, there had been no division in this country in regard to that principle except the opposition of the Abolitionists. In the House of Representatives of the Illinois Legislature, upon a resolution asserting that principle, every Whig and every Democrat in the House voted in the affirmative, and only four men voted against it, and those four were Old Line Abolitionists.

In 1854, Mr. Abraham Lincoln and Mr. Trumbull entered into an arrangement, one with the other, and each with his respective friends, to dissolve the old Whig party on the one hand, and to dissolve the old Democratic party on the other, and to connect the members of both into an Abolition party, under the name and disguise of a Republican party.

In my remarks I mean nothing personally disrespectful or unkind to Mr. Lincoln. I have known him for nearly twenty-five years. There were many points of sympathy be-

tween us when we first got acquainted. We were both comparatively boys, both struggling with poverty in a strange land. I was a school-teacher in the town of Winchester, and he a flourishing grocery-keeper * in the town of Salem. He was more successful in his occupation than I was in mine, and hence more fortunate in this world's goods. Lincoln is one of those peculiar men who perform with admirable skill everything which they undertake. I made as good a school-teacher as I could, and when a cabinet-maker I made a good bedstead and tables, although my old boss said I succeeded better with bureaus and secretaries than with anything else; but I believe Lincoln was always more successful in business than I, for his business enabled him to get into the Legislature. I met him there, however, and had a sympathy with him, because of the up-hill struggle we both had in life. He was then just as good at telling an anecdote as now. He could beat any of the boys wrestling, or running a foot-race, in pitching quoits or tossing a copper; could ruin more liquor than all the boys of the town together; and the dignity and impartiality with which he presided at a horse-race or fist-fight excited the admiration and won the praise of everybody that was present and participated. . . .

Having formed this new party for the benefit of deserters from Whiggery, and deserters from Democracy, and having laid down the Abolition platform, Lincoln now takes his stand and proclaims his Abolition doctrines.

The Black Republican creed lays it down expressly that under no circumstances shall we acquire any more territory, unless slavery is first prohibited in the country. I ask Mr. Lincoln whether he is in favor of that proposition. Are you opposed to the acquisition of any more territory, under any

* Equivalent in that day to "saloon-keeper."

circumstances, unless slavery is prohibited in it? That he does not like to answer. When I ask him whether he stands up to that article in the platform of his party, he turns, Yankee-fashion, and without answering it, asks me whether I am in favor of acquiring territory without regard to how it may affect the Union on the slavery question. I answer that whenever it becomes necessary, in our growth and progress, to acquire more territory, that I am in favor of it, without reference to the question of slavery; and when we have acquired it, I will leave the people free to do as they please, either to make it slave or free territory as they prefer. It is idle to tell me or you that we have territory enough. Our fathers supposed that we had enough when our territory extended to the Mississippi River; but a few years' growth and expansion satisfied them that we needed more, and the Louisiana Territory, from the West branch of the Mississippi to the British possessions, was acquired. Then we acquired Oregon, then California and New Mexico. We have enough now for the present; but this is a young and growing nation. It swarms as often as a hive of bees; and as new swarms are turned out each year, there must be hives in which they can gather and make their honey.

In less than fifteen years, if the same progress that has distinguished this country for the last fifteen years continues, every foot of vacant land between this and the Pacific Ocean, owned by the United States, will be occupied. Will you not continue to increase at the end of fifteen years as well as now? I tell you, increase, and multiply, and expand, is the law of this nation's existence. You cannot limit this great Republic by mere boundary lines, saying, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." Any one of you gentlemen might as well say to a son twelve years

old that he is big enough, and must not grow any larger; and in order to prevent his growth, put a hoop around him to keep him to his present size. What would be the result? Either the hoop must burst and be rent asunder, or the child must die. So it would be with this great nation. With our natural increase, growing with a rapidity unknown in any other part of the globe, with the tide of emigration that is fleeing from despotism in the old world to seek refuge in our own, there is a constant torrent pouring into this country that requires more land, more territory upon which to settle; and just as fast as our interests and our destiny require additional territory in the North, in the South, or on the islands of the ocean, I am for it; and when we acquire it, will leave the people, according to the Nebraska bill, free to do as they please on the subject of slavery and every other question.

I have reason to recollect that some people in this country think that Fred Douglass is a very good man. The last time I came here to make a speech, while talking from the stand to you, I saw a carriage — and a magnificent one it was — drive up and take a position on the outside of the crowd; a beautiful young lady was sitting on the box-seat, whilst Fred Douglass and her mother reclined inside, and the owner of the carriage acted as driver. I saw this in your own town. All I have to say of it is this, that if you, Black Republicans, think that the negro ought to be on a social equality with your wives and daughters, and ride in a carriage with your wife, whilst you drive the team, you have a perfect right to do so.

Four years ago I appeared before the people of Knox County for the purpose of defending my political action upon the Compromise Measures of 1850 and the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill. Those of you before me who

were present then will remember that I vindicated myself for supporting those two measures by the fact that they rested upon the great fundamental principle that the people of each State and each Territory of this Union have the right, and ought to be permitted to exercise the right, of regulating their own domestic concerns in their own way, subject to no other limitation or restriction than that which the Constitution of the United States imposes upon them. I then called upon the people of Illinois to decide whether that principle of self-government was right or wrong. If it was and is right, then the Compromise Measures of 1850 were right, and consequently, the Kansas and Nebraska bill, based upon the same principle, must necessarily have been right.

The Kansas and Nebraska bill declared, in so many words, that it was the true intent and meaning of the Act not to legislate slavery into any State or Territory, nor to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States. For the last four years I have devoted all my energies, in private and public, to commend that principle to the American people. Whatever else may be said in condemnation or support of my political course, I apprehend that no honest man will doubt the fidelity with which, under all circumstances, I have stood by it.

During the last year a question arose in the Congress of the United States whether or not that principle would be violated by the admission of Kansas into the Union under the Lecompton Constitution. In my opinion, the attempt to force Kansas in under that constitution was a gross violation of the principle enunciated in the Compromise Measures of 1850, and Kansas and Nebraska bill

of 1854, and therefore I led off in the fight against the Lecompton Constitution, and conducted it until the effort to carry that constitution through Congress was abandoned. And I can appeal to all men, friends and foes, Democrats and Republicans, Northern men and Southern men, that during the whole of that fight I carried the banner of Popular Sovereignty aloft, and never allowed it to trail in the dust, or lowered my flag until victory perched upon our arms.

On the sixteenth of June the Republican Convention assembled at Springfield and nominated Mr. Lincoln as their candidate for the United States Senate, and he on that occasion delivered a speech in which he laid down what he understood to be the Republican creed, and the platform on which he proposed to stand during the contest.

The principal points in that speech of Mr. Lincoln's [included the claim] that this Government could not endure permanently divided into Free and Slave States, as our fathers made it; that they must all become Free or all become Slave; all become one thing, or all become the other, — otherwise this Union could not continue to exist.

In regard to his doctrine that this Government was in violation of the law of God, which says that a house divided against itself cannot stand, I repudiated it as a slander upon the immortal framers of our Constitution . . . I have often repeated, and now again assert, that in my opinion our Government can endure forever, divided into Free and Slave States as our fathers made it, — each State having the right to prohibit, abolish, or sustain slavery, just as it pleases.

This Government was made upon the great basis of the sovereignty of the States, the right of each State to regulate its own domestic institutions to suit itself; and that right

was conferred with the understanding and expectation that inasmuch as each locality had separate interests, each locality must have different and distinct local and domestic institutions, corresponding to its wants and interests. Our fathers knew when they made the Government that the laws and institutions which were well adapted to the Green Mountains of Vermont were unsuited to the rice plantations of South Carolina. They knew then, as well as we know now, that the laws and institutions which would be well adapted to the beautiful prairies of Illinois would not be suited to the mining regions of California. They knew that in a Republic as broad as this, having such a variety of soil, climate, and interest, there must necessarily be a corresponding variety of local laws, — the policy and institutions of each State adapted to its condition and wants. For this reason this Union was established on the right of each State to do as it pleased on the question of slavery, and every other question; and the various States were not allowed to complain of, much less interfere with, the policy of their neighbors.

Suppose the doctrine advocated by Mr. Lincoln and the Abolitionists of this day had prevailed when the Constitution was made, what would have been the result? Imagine for a moment that Mr. Lincoln had been a member of the Convention that framed the Constitution of the United States, and that when its members were about to sign that wonderful document, he had arisen in that Convention as he did at Springfield this summer, and, addressing himself to the President, had said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand; this Government, divided into Free and Slave States cannot endure, they must all be Free or all be Slave; they must all be one thing, or all the other, — otherwise, it is a violation of the law of God, and cannot

continue to exist"; — suppose Mr. Lincoln had convinced that body of sages that that doctrine was sound, what would have been the result? Remember that the Union was then composed of thirteen States, twelve of which were slaveholding, and one free. Do you think that the one Free State would have outvoted the twelve slaveholding States, and thus have secured the abolition of slavery? On the other hand, would not the twelve slaveholding States have out-voted the one Free State, and thus have fastened slavery, by a constitutional provision, on every foot of the American Republic forever?

You see that if this Abolition doctrine of Mr. Lincoln had prevailed when the Government was made, it would have established slavery as a permanent institution in all the States, whether they wanted it or not; and the question for us to determine in Illinois now, as one of the Free States, is whether or not we are willing, having become the majority section, to enforce a doctrine on the minority which we would have resisted with our hearts' blood had it been attempted on us when we were in a minority. How has the South lost her power as the majority section in this Union, and how have the Free States gained it, except under the operation of that principle which declares the right of the people of each State and each Territory to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way? It was under that principle that slavery was abolished in New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania; it was under that principle that one half of the slaveholding States became free; it was under that principle that the number of Free States increased until, from being one out of twelve States, we have grown to be the majority of States of the whole Union, with the power to control the House of Representatives

and Senate, and the power, consequently, to elect a President by Northern votes, without the aid of a Southern State. Having obtained this power under the operation of that great principle, are you now prepared to abandon the principle and declare that merely because we have the power you will wage a war against the Southern States and their institutions until you force them to abolish slavery everywhere?

My friend Lincoln finds it extremely difficult to manage a debate in the center part of the State, where there is a mixture of men from the North and the South. In the extreme northern part of Illinois he can proclaim as bold and radical Abolitionism as ever Giddings, Lovejoy, or Garrison enunciated; but when he gets down a little farther south he claims that he is an Old Line Whig, a disciple of Henry Clay and declares that he still adheres to the Old Line Whig creed, and has nothing whatever to do with Abolitionism, or negro equality, or negro citizenship. I once before hinted this of Mr. Lincoln in a public speech, and at Charleston he defied me to show that there was any difference between his speeches in the North and in the South, and that they were not in strict harmony. I will now call your attention to two of them, and you can then say whether you would be apt to believe that the same man ever uttered both. In a speech in reply to me at Chicago in July last, Mr. Lincoln in speaking of the equality of the negro with the white man used the following language: —

"I should like to know, if, taking this old Declaration of Independence, which declares that all men are equal upon principle, and making exceptions to it, where will it stop? If one man says it does not mean a negro, why may not another man say it does not mean another man? If the Declaration is not the truth, let us get the statute book in

which we find it, and tear it out. Who is so bold as to do it? If it is not true, let us tear it out."

You find that Mr. Lincoln there proposed that if the doctrine of the Declaration of Independence, declaring all men to be born equal, did not include the negro and put him on equality with the white man, that we should take the statute book and tear it out. He there took the ground that the negro race is included in the Declaration of Independence as the equal of the white race, and that there could be no such thing as a distinction in the races, making one superior and the other inferior. I read now from the same speech: —

"My friends, . . . let us discard all this quibbling about this man and the other man, this race and that race and the other race being inferior, and therefore they must be placed in an inferior position, discarding our standard that we have left us. Let us discard all these things, and unite as one people throughout this land, until we shall once more stand up declaring that all men are created equal." ["That's right," etc.]

Yes, I have no doubt that you think it is right; but the Lincoln men down in Coles, Tazewell, and Sangamon counties *do not* think it is right . . . I will show you . . . what Mr. Lincoln said down in Egypt in order to get votes in that locality, where they do not hold to such a doctrine. In a joint discussion between Mr. Lincoln and myself, at Charleston, Mr. Lincoln used the following language: —

"I will say, then, that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races; that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of making voters of the free negroes, or jurors, or qualifying them to hold office, or having

them to marry with white people. I will say, in addition, that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which, I suppose, will forever forbid the two races living together upon terms of social and political equality; and inasmuch as they cannot so live, that while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, that I, as much as any other man, am in favor of the superior position being assigned to the white man."

Fellow citizens, here you find men hurrahing for Lincoln, and saying that he did right, when in one part of the State he stood up for negro equality; and in another part, for political effect, discarded the doctrine, and declared that there always must be a superior and inferior race.

Now, how can you reconcile those two positions of Mr. Lincoln? He is to be voted for in the South as a pro-slavery man, and he is to be voted for in the North as an Abolitionist.

Let me ask him why he cannot avow his principles the same in the north as in the south — the same in every county — if he has a conviction that they are just? But I forgot, — he would not be a Republican, if his principles would apply alike to every part of the country. The party to which he belongs is bounded and limited by geographical lines. With their principles, they cannot even cross the Mississippi River on your ferry-boats. They cannot cross over the Ohio into Kentucky. Lincoln himself cannot visit the land of his fathers, the scenes of his childhood, the graves of his ancestors, and carry his Abolition principles, as he declared them at Chicago, with him. This Republican organization appeals to the North against the South; it appeals to Northern passion, Northern prejudice, and Northern ambition, against Southern people, Southern States,

and Southern institutions, and its only hope of success is by that appeal.

Mr. Lincoln tells you that I will not argue the question whether slavery is right or wrong. I tell you why I will not do it. I hold that, under the Constitution of the United States, each State of this Union has a right to do as it pleases on the subject of slavery. In Illinois we have exercised that sovereign right by prohibiting slavery within our own limits. I approve of that line of policy. We have performed our whole duty in Illinois. We have gone as far as we have a right to go under the Constitution of our common country. It is none of our business whether slavery exists in Missouri or not. Missouri is a sovereign State of this Union, and has the same right to decide the slavery question for herself that Illinois has to decide it for herself. Hence I do not choose to occupy the time allotted to me in discussing a question that we have no right to act upon.

# *Middle Speech of Abraham Lincoln*

BY HARRY F. LAKE

LADIES and Gentlemen: When a man hears himself somewhat misrepresented it provokes him . . . but when misrepresentation becomes very gross . . . it is more apt to amuse him. Judge Douglas alleges, after running through the whole history of the Democratic and old Whig parties that Judge Trumbull and I arranged that he and I would both go to the United States Senate, I to take Shield's place and Trumbull to take the Judge's place, when he should die or resign or not be re-elected. All I have to say is that the Judge can't prove it because it is not so. Now the Judge can't know whether this statement is true or false, but I do know, and there is not one word of truth in it. All I can say about this alleged bargain between Trumbull and myself is that there is no single word of truth in it.

[Now I hear a voice asking me about Popular Sovereignty.] Well, then, let us talk about Popular Sovereignty . . . Is it the right of the people to have slavery or not have it, as they see fit, in the Territories? I will state — and I have an able man to watch me — my understanding is that Popular Sovereignty, as now applied to the question of slavery, does allow the people of a Territory to have slavery if they want to, but does *not* allow them not to have it if they *do not* want it. I do not mean that if this vast concourse of people were in a Territory of the United

States, any one of them would be obliged to have a slave if he did not want one; but I do say that, as I understand the Dred Scott decision, if any one man wants slaves, all the rest have no way of keeping that one man from holding them.

I want to ask your attention to a portion of the Nebraska bill which Judge Douglas has quoted: "It being the true intent and meaning of this Act, not to legislate slavery into any Territory or State, nor to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States." Thereupon Judge Douglas and others began to argue in favor of the right of the people to have slaves if they wanted them, and to exclude slavery if they did not want them. [Now, however, along comes the Dred Scott decision] holding that "under the Constitution," the people cannot exclude slavery from a Territory, . . . and this man sticks to a decision which forbids the people of a Territory from excluding slavery, and he does so, not because he says it is right in itself — he does not give any opinion on that, — but because it has been decided by the court; and being decided by the Court, he is, and you are, bound to take it in your political action as law, not that he judges at all of its merits, but because a decision of the Court is to him a "Thus saith the Lord."

[Judge Douglas has not always been so loyal to the decisions of the Courts.] I remind him of another piece of history on the question of respect for judicial decisions when the large party to which Judge Douglas belonged were displeased with a decision of the Supreme Court of Illinois; because they had decided that a Governor could not remove a Secretary of State. You will find the whole story in Ford's

"History of Illinois," and I know that Judge Douglas will not deny that he was then in favor of overslaughing that decision by the mode of adding five new judges, so as to vote down the four old ones. Not only so, but it ended in *the Judge's sitting down on that very bench as one of the five new judges to break down the four old ones.* It was in this way precisely that he got his title of judge. Now, when the Judge tells me that men appointed conditionally to sit as members of a court will have to be catechised beforehand upon some subject, I say, "You know, Judge; you have tried it." When he says a court of this kind will lose the confidence of all men, will be prostituted and disgraced by such a proceeding, I say, "You know best, Judge; you have been through the mill."

I pass on to consider one more of the Judge's little follies. He is wofully at fault about his early friend Lincoln being a "grocery-keeper." I don't know as it would be a great sin if I had been; but he is mistaken. Lincoln never kept a grocery anywhere in the world. It is true that Lincoln did work the latter part of one winter in a little still-house, up at the head of a hollow.

In view, however, of the Judge's adherence to the Supreme Court's decree in which it has been declared that a Territorial Legislature has no Constitutional right to exclude slavery from the territorial limits I have heretofore propounded to the Judge the question whether the people of a United States Territory in any lawful way against the wish of any citizen of the United States can exclude slavery from its limits prior to the formation of a State Constitution. And he has stated as he himself says a hundred times that the people have the lawful means to introduce it or exclude it as they please since slavery cannot exist a day or an hour unless supported by local police regulations

which only can be established by the local Legislature. And he says, therefore, that it is of no consequence what the decision of the Supreme Court may be on the abstract question, still the right of the people to make a slave Territory or a Free Territory is perfect and complete under the Nebraska Bill.

For the sake of clearness, I state it again: that they can exclude slavery from the Territory, 1st, by withholding what he assumes to be an indispensable assistance to it in the way of supporting legislation; and, 2nd, by unfriendly legislation. I ask your attention for a while to his position . . .

I maintain when he says, after the Supreme Court have decided the question, that the people may yet exclude slavery by any means whatever, he does virtually say that it is *not* a question for the Supreme Court.

In a variety of ways he has said heretofore that it was a question for the Supreme Court. He did not stop then to tell us that whatever the Supreme Court decides, the people can by withholding necessary "police regulations" keep slavery out.

I hold that the proposition that slavery cannot enter a new country without police regulations is historically false. I hold that the history of this country shows that the institution of slavery was originally planted upon this continent *without* these "police regulations" which the Judge now thinks necessary . . . Not only so, but is there not another fact: how came this Dred Scott decision to be made? It was made upon the case of a negro being taken and actually held in slavery in Minnesota Territory . . . *Will the Judge pretend that Dred Scott was not held there without police regulations?* . . .

I wish to ask one other question. It being understood that the Constitution of the United States guarantees prop-

erty in slaves in the Territories, if there is any infringement of the right of that property, would not the United States Courts, organized for the government of the Territory, apply such remedy as might be necessary in that case? It is a maxim held by the courts that there is no wrong without its remedy; and the courts have a remedy for whatever is acknowledged and treated as a wrong.

Again: I will ask you, my friends, if you were elected members of the Legislature, what would be the first thing you would have to do before entering upon your duties? *Swear to support the Constitution of the United States.*

Suppose you believe, as Judge Douglas does, that the Constitution of the United States guarantees to your neighbor the right to hold slaves in that Territory; that they are his property: how can you clear your oaths unless you give him such legislation as is necessary to enable him to enjoy that property? . . . And what I say here will hold with still more force against the Judge's doctrine of "unfriendly legislation." How could you, having sworn to support the Constitution, and believing it guaranteed the right to hold slaves in the Territories, assist in legislation *intended to defeat that right?* That would be violating your own view of the Constitution.

Lastly, I would ask: Is not Congress itself bound to give legislative support to any right that is established in the United States Constitution? A member of Congress swears to support the Constitution of the United States; and if he sees a right established by that Constitution which needs specific legislative protection, can he clear his oath without giving that protection? Many of us who are opposed to slavery give our acquiescence to a Fugitive-Slave law. We hold ourselves under obligations to pass such law, and abide by it when it is passed. Because the Constitution makes provision that the owners of slaves shall have the

right to reclaim them. That right is, as Judge Douglas says, a barren right, unless there is legislation that will enforce it.

The truth about the matter is this: Judge Douglas has sung paeans to his "Popular Sovereignty" doctrine until his Supreme Court, cooperating with him, has *squatted* his Squatter Sovereignty out. But he will keep up this species of humbuggery about Squatter Sovereignty. He has at last invented this sort of *do nothing Sovereignty,* — that the people may exclude slavery by a sort of "Sovereignty" that is exercised by doing nothing at all. Is not that running his Popular Sovereignty down awfully? Has it not got down as thin as the homeopathic soup that was made by boiling the shadow of a pigeon that had starved to death? But at last when it is brought to the test of close reasoning, there is not even that thin decoction of it left . . . The Dred Scott decision covers the whole ground, and while it occupies it, there is no room even for the shadow of a starved pigeon to occupy the same ground.

Now the fact is that whatever Judge Douglas may say, the Supreme Court have, itself, said that no Territorial Legislature can exclude slavery from their limits. In the Dred Scott case the Supreme Court has said that "the right of property in a slave is distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution". . . I believe that the right of property in a slave is *not* distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution, but Judge Douglas [must now think that such is the case, for the Court have stated it, — and the Court, itself, have no longer the right to deny it.] If nothing in the Constitution or laws of any State can destroy a right distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution of the United States, then nothing in the Constitution or laws of any State can destroy the right of property in a slave in that State. [The Court has already said no Territory can exclude slavery,] and Judge Douglas, by his general maxims,

that he "don't care whether slavery is voted up or voted down," that "upon principles of equality it should be allowed to go everywhere," that "there is no inconsistency between free and slave institutions," — Judge Douglas, by these assertions, is preparing the public mind for that new Dred Scott decision, in which, consistent with the right to property in a slave distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution of the United States, the Court shall say that as no Territory can, so also no state has the power to exclude slavery from their midst. Let this be done, then in this whole land, — the institution shall become both national and perpetual.

In my "house divided" speech my main object was to show that there was a tendency, if not a conspiracy, among those who have engineered this slavery question for the last four or five years, to make slavery perpetual and universal in this nation. I concluded with this bit of comment: —

"We cannot absolutely know that these exact adaptations are the result of preconcert; but when we see a lot of framed timbers, different portions of which we know have been gotten out at different times and places, and by different workmen, — Stephen, Franklin, Roger, and James, for instance, — and when we see these timbers joined together, and see they exactly make the frame of a house or a mill, all the tenons and mortises exactly fitting, and all the lengths and proportions of the different pieces exactly adapted to their respective places, and not a piece too many or too few, — not omitting even the scaffolding, — or if a single piece be lacking, we see the place in the frame exactly fitted and prepared yet to bring such piece in, — in such a case we feel it impossible not to believe that Stephen and Franklin and Roger and James all understood one another from the beginning, and all worked upon a common plan or draft before the first blow was struck."

Judge Douglas has said to you that he has not been able to get from me whether I am in favor of negro citizenship. I tell him very frankly that I am not in favor of negro citizenship . . . Now, my opinion is that the different States have the power to make a negro a citizen, under the Constitution of the United States, if they choose. The Dred Scott decision decides that they have not that power. If the State of Illinois had that power, I should be opposed to the exercise of it. That is all I have to say about it.

The Judge has alluded to the Declaration of Independence, and insisted that negroes are not included in that Declaration; and that it is a slander upon the framers of that instrument to suppose that negroes were meant therein; and he asks you: Is it possible to believe that Mr. Jefferson, who penned the immortal paper, could have supposed himself applying the language of that instrument to the negro race, and yet held a portion of that race in slavery? Would he not at once have freed them?

I only have to remark upon this part of the Judge's speech that I believe the entire records of the world, from the date of the Declaration of Independence up to within three years ago, may be searched in vain for one single affirmation, from one single man, that the negro was not included in the Declaration of Independence; I think I may defy Judge Douglas to show that he ever said so, that Washington ever said so, that any President ever said so, that any member of Congress ever said so, or that any living man upon the whole earth ever said so, until the necessities of the present policy of the Democratic party, in regard to slavery, had to invent that affirmation. And I will remind Judge Douglas and his audience that while Mr. Jefferson was the owner of slaves, as undoubtedly he was, in speaking upon this very subject he used the strong language that "he trembled for his country when he remembered that God

was just"; and I will offer the highest premium in my power to Judge Douglas if he will show that he, in all his life, ever uttered a sentiment at all akin to that of Jefferson.

Indeed, while I was at the hotel today, an elderly gentleman called upon me to know whether I was really in favor of producing a perfect equality between the negroes and white people. I will say that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races; that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people; and I will say, in addition to this, that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race.

Now that is the true complexion of all I have ever said in regard to the institution of slavery and the black race. Anything that argues me into a plea of perfect social and political equality with the negro is but a specious and fantastic arrangement of words by which a man can prove that a horse chestnut is a chestnut horse.

I do not perceive that because the white man is to have the superior position the negro should be denied everything. I do not understand that because I do not want a negro woman for a slave I must necessarily want her for a wife. My understanding is that I can just let her alone. I am now in my fiftieth year, and I certainly never have had a black woman for either a slave or a wife. So it seems to me quite possible for us to get along without making either slaves or wives of negroes.

But the Judge will have it that if we do not confess that there is a sort of inequality between the white and the black races which justifies us in making them slaves, we must then insist that there is a degree of equality that requires us to make them our wives. Now, I have all the while taken a broad distinction in regard to that matter . . . I have all the while maintained that in so far as it should be insisted that there was an equality between the white and black races that should produce a perfect social and political equality, it was an impossibility . . . I have said that in their right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," as proclaimed in that old Declaration, the inferior races are our equals. And these declarations I have constantly made in reference to the abstract moral question, to contemplate and consider when we are legislating about any new country which is not already cursed with the actual presence of slavery.

I have insisted that, in legislating for new countries where [slavery] does not exist, there is no just rule other than that of moral and abstract right! With reference to those new countries, those maxims as to the right of people to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" were the just rules to be constantly referred to. There is no misunderstanding this, except by men interested to misunderstand it. The Judge would have it that I change the complexion of my speeches depending on whether I am in the North or the South parts of the State. He argues erroneously and unfairly on this matter. He boasts for instance that he would "trot me down into Egypt." He parades this in the very teeth of his knowledge that I made the stipulation that we both should go to Jonesboro in Egypt and he was very reluctant to make this stipulation. Would his trotting me into Egypt scare me to death did he think? Why I know

these people. I was raised just a little East of here. I am part of this people.

At Galesburg, the other day, I said, in answer to Judge Douglas, that three years ago there never had been a man, so far as I knew or believed, in the whole world, who had said that the Declaration of Independence did not include negroes in the term "all men." I reassert . . . today that Judge Douglas and all his friends may search the whole records of the country, and [they will not] be able to find that one human being three years ago had ever uttered the astounding sentiment that the term "all men" in the Declaration did not include the negro.

I know, of course, that more than three years ago there were men who, finding this assertion constantly in the way of their schemes to bring about the ascendency and perpetuation of slavery, *denied the truth of it.* I know that Mr. Calhoun denied the truth of the Declaration. I know that it ran along in the mouth of some Southern men for a period of years, ending at last in that shameful, though rather forcible, declaration of Pettit of Indiana, upon the floor of the United States Senate, that the Declaration of Independence was in that respect "a self-evident lie," rather than a self-evident truth. But I say, with a perfect knowledge of all this hawking at the Declaration without directly attacking it, that three years ago there never had lived a man who had ventured to assail it in the sneaking way of pretending to believe it, and then asserting it did not include the negro. I believe the first man who ever said it was Chief Justice Taney in the Dred Scott case, and the next to him was our friend Stephen A. Douglas. And now it has become the catchword of the entire party.

I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the white and the black races. I hold that there

is no reason in the world why the negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, – the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I hold that he is as much entitled to these as the white man. . . . And in the right to eat the bread, without the leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns, he is my equal, and the equal of Judge Douglas and the equal of every living man.

[And I declare to you that] when this new principle – this new proposition that no human being ever thought of three years ago is brought forward, *I combat it* as having an evil tendency, if not an evil design. I combat it as having a tendency to dehumanize the negro, to take away from him the right of ever striving to be a man. I combat it as being one of the thousand things constantly done in these days to prepare the public mind to make property, and nothing but property, of *the negro in all the states of this Union.*

Judge Douglas has read from my speech in Springfield in which I say, "that a house divided against itself cannot stand." Does the Judge say it can stand? . . . I would like to know if it is his opinion that a house divided against itself can stand. If he does then there is a question of veracity, not between him and me, but between the Judge and an authority of a somewhat higher character.

I know that the Judge may readily enough agree with me that the maxim which was put forth by the Savior is true, but he may allege that I misapply it. . . . When he undertakes to say because I think this nation, so far as the question of slavery is concerned, will all become one thing or all the other, I am in favor of bringing about a dead uniformity in the various states in all their institutions he argues erroneously. The very variety of the local institutions in the states, springing from differences in the soil,

differences in the face of the country, and in the climate, are bonds of Union. They do not make "a house divided against itself," but they make a house united.

The cranberry laws of Indiana, the oyster laws of Virginia, the lumber laws of Maine; that Louisiana produces sugar and Illinois flour, have not produced discord among us. They have tended towards peace and unity. When have we had peace in regard to this thing which I say is an element of discord in the Union? It was when this institution of slavery remained quiet where it was. We have had difficulty and turmoil whenever it has made a struggle to spread itself where it was not. I ask, then, if experience does not speak in thunder tones, telling us that the policy which has given peace to the country heretofore now being returned to, gives the greatest promise of peace again?

But can this question of slavery be considered as among *these* varieties in the institutions of the country? I leave it to you to say whether, in the history of our Government, this institution of slavery has not always failed to be a bond of union, and, on the contrary, been an apple of discord and an element of division in the house. I ask you to consider whether, so long as the moral constitution of men's minds shall continue to be the same, after this generation and assemblage shall sink into the grave, and another race shall arise, . . . whether [slavery] will not continue an element of division. If so, then I have a right to say that, in regard to this question, the Union is a house divided against itself; and when the Judge reminds me that I have often said to him that the institution of slavery has existed for eighty years in some states, and yet it does not exist in some others, I agree to the fact, and I account for it by looking at the position in which our fathers originally placed it — restricting it from the new Territories where it had not

gone, and legislating to cut off its source by the abrogation of the slave trade, thus putting the seal of legislation *against its spread.*

The public mind *did* rest in the belief that it was in the course of ultimate extinction. But lately, I think, the Judge, and those acting with him, have placed that institution on a new basis, which looks to the *perpetuity and nationalization of slavery.* And while it is placed upon this new basis, I say, and I have said that I believe we shall not have peace upon the question until the opponents of slavery arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or, on the other hand, that its advocates will push it forward until it shall become alike lawful in all the states, old as well as new, North as well as South. Now I believe if we could arrest the spread, and place it where Washington and Jefferson and Madison placed it, it would be in the course of ultimate extinction and the public mind *would,* as for eighty years past, believe that it was in the course of ultimate extinction.

Have we ever had any peace on this slavery question? When are we to have peace upon it, if it is kept in the position it now occupies? . . . [The people] have been wrangling over this question for at least forty years. This was the cause of the agitation resulting in the Missouri Compromise; this produced the troubles at the annexation of Texas. . . . The Compromise of 1850 settled the slavery question *forever* as both the great political parties declared in their National Conventions. That "forever" turned out to be just four years, *when Judge Douglas himself reopened it.* When is it likely to come to an end? He introduced the Nebraska bill in 1854 to put *another end* to the slavery agitation. He has never made a speech since, until he got

into a quarrel with the President about the Lecompton Constitution, in which he has not declared that we are *just at the end* of the slavery agitation. Now he tells us again that it is all over, and the people of Kansas have voted down the Lecompton Constitution. How is it over? That was only one of the attempts at putting an end to the slavery agitation — one of these "final settlements.". . . Now at this day in the history of the world we can no more foretell where the end of this slavery agitation will be than we can see the end of the world itself. The Nebraska-Kansas bill was introduced four years and a half ago, and if the agitation is ever to come to an end, we may say we are four years and a half nearer that end. So, too, we can say we are four years and a half nearer the end of the world, and we can just as clearly see the end of the world as we can see the end of this agitation. If Kansas should sink today, and leave a great vacant space in the earth's surface, this vexed question would still be among us. I say, then, there is no way of putting an end to the slavery agitation amongst us but to put it back where our fathers placed it; no way but to keep it out of our new Territories, to restrict it forever to the old states where it now exists.

I wish to thank Judge Douglas profoundly for his public annunciation that his system of policy in regard to the institution of slavery *contemplates that it shall last forever.* Judge Douglas asks you, "why cannot the institution of slavery, or rather why cannot the nation part Slave and part Free, continue as our fathers made it *forever?*" I insist that our fathers did not make this nation half Slave and half Free, or part Slave and part Free. I insist that they found the institution of slavery existing here. They did not make it so, but they left it so because they knew of no way to get rid of it at that time. When Judge Douglas . . . says

that, as a matter of choice, the fathers . . . made this nation part Slave and part Free, *he assumes what is historically a falsehood.* When the fathers cut off the source of slavery by the abolition of the slave trade, and [excluded] it from the new Territories where it had not existed, they placed it where they understood, and all sensible men understood, it was in the course of ultimate extinction. When Judge Douglas asks me why it cannot continue as our fathers made it, I ask him why he and his friends could not let it remain as our fathers made it.

I have said that we were now far into the fifth year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object and confident promise of putting an end to the slavery agitation. . . . In every speech Judge Douglas was full of felicitations that we were *just at the end* of the slavery agitation. The last tip of the last joint of the old serpent's tail was just drawing out of view. But has it proved so? Under that policy that agitation has not only not ceased but has constantly augmented. [This agitation disturbs the general peace of the country. It goes outside of political circles. It enters] the churches and rends them asunder. What divided the great Methodist Church into two parts, North and South? What has raised this constant disturbance in every Presbyterian General Assembly that meets? What disturbed the Unitarian Church in this very city two years ago? What has jarred and shaken the great American Tract Society recently? Is it not this same mighty, deep-seated power that somehow operates on the minds of men, exciting and stirring them up in every avenue of society — in politics, in religion, in literature, in morals, in all the manifold relations of life? I have stated upon former occasions, I may as well state again, what I understand to be the real issue in this controversy between Judge Douglas and myself.

[The issue has not been] my wanting to make war between the Free and the Slave States, [nor my favoring] a perfect social and political equality between the white and black races. These are false issues. The real issue in this controversy — the one pressing upon every mind — is the sentiment on the part of one class that looks upon the institution of slavery as wrong, and of another class that does not look upon it as a wrong.

The Judge tells us that he is opposed to making any odious distinction between Free and Slave States. I am altogether unaware that the Republicans are in favor of making any odious distinctions between the Free and Slave States. But there is still a difference, I think, between Judge Douglas and the Republicans in this. I suppose that the real difference between Judge Douglas and his friends, and the Republicans on the contrary is, that the Judge is not in favor of making any difference between slavery and liberty, that he is in favor of eradicating, of pressing out of view, the questions of preference in this country for free or slave institutions; and consequently every sentiment he utters discards the idea that there is any wrong in slavery. Everything that emanates from him or his coadjutors in their course of policy carefully excludes the thought that there is anything wrong in slavery. All their arguments will be seen to exclude the thought that there is anything whatever wrong in slavery. If you will take the Judge's speeches, and select the short and pointed sentences expressed by him, — as his declaration that he "don't care whether slavery is voted up or down," you will see at once that this is perfectly logical, if you do not admit that slavery is wrong. If you do admit that it is wrong, Judge Douglas cannot logically say he don't care whether a wrong is voted up or down.

Judge Douglas declares that if any community wants

slavery, they have a right to have it. He can say that logically, if he says that there is no wrong in slavery; but if you admit that there is a wrong in it, he cannot logically say that anybody has a right to do wrong. He insists that, upon the score of equality, the owners of slaves and owners of property — of horses and every other sort of property — should be alike, and hold them alike in a new Territory. That is perfectly logical if the two species of property are alike and are equally founded in right. But if you admit that one of them is wrong, you cannot institute any equality between right and wrong. And from this difference of sentiment, — the belief on the part of one that the institution is wrong, and a policy springing from that belief which looks to the arrest of the enlargement of that wrong; and this other sentiment, that it is no wrong, and a policy sprung from that sentiment, which will tolerate no idea of preventing the wrong from growing larger, and looks to there never being an end of it through all the existence of things, — arises the real difference between Judge Douglas and his friends on the one hand, and the Republicans on the other.

We have in this nation this element of domestic slavery. It is a matter of absolute certainty that it is a disturbing element. It is the opinion of all the great men who have expressed an opinion upon it, that it is a dangerous element. We keep up a controversy in regard to it. That controversy necessarily springs from difference of opinion; and if we can learn exactly, — can reduce to the lowest elements — what that difference of opinion is, we perhaps shall be better prepared for discussing the different systems of policy that we would propose in regard to that disturbing element. I suggest again that the difference of opinion, reduced to its lowest terms, is no other than the difference between the men who think slavery a wrong, and those who do not think it wrong. The Republican party think it wrong; we

think it is a moral, a social, and a political wrong. We think it is a wrong not confining itself merely to the persons or the States where it exists, but that it is a wrong in its tendency, that extends itself to the existence of the whole nation. Because we think it wrong, we propose a course of policy that shall deal with it as a wrong. We deal with it as with any other wrong, in so far as we can prevent its growing any larger, and so deal with it that in the run of time there may be some promise of an end to it.

We have a due regard to the actual presence of it amongst us, and the difficulties of getting rid of it in any satisfactory way, and all the constitutional obligations thrown about it. I suppose that in reference both to its actual existence in the nation, and to our constitutional obligations, we have no right at all to disturb it in the States where it exists, and we profess that we have no more inclination to disturb it than we have the right to do it. . . . We also oppose it as an evil so far as it seeks to spread itself. We insist on the policy that shall restrict it to its present limits. We don't suppose that in doing this we violate anything due to the actual presence of the institution, or anything due to the constitutional guarantees thrown around it.

We oppose the Dred Scott decision in a certain way. We do not propose that when Dred Scott has been decided to be a slave by that court, we, as a mob, will decide him to be free. We do not propose that, when any other one, or one thousand, shall be decided by the court to be slaves, we will in any violent way disturb the rights of property thus settled: but we nevertheless do oppose that decision . . . [since we believe] it lays the foundation for spreading that evil into the States themselves. We propose so resisting it as to have it reversed if we can, and a new judicial rule established upon this subject.

I will say now that there is a sentiment in the country

contrary to me, — a sentiment which holds that slavery is not wrong, and therefore it goes for the policy that does not propose dealing with it as a wrong. That policy is the Democratic policy, and that sentiment is the Democratic sentiment. If there be a doubt in the mind of any one of this vast audience that this is really the central idea of the Democratic party, in relation to the subject, I ask him to bear with me while I state a few things tending, as I think, to prove that proposition.

The leading man — I think I may do my friend Judge Douglas the honor of calling him such — advocating the present Democratic policy, never himself says it is wrong. He has the high distinction, so far as I know, of never having said slavery is either right or wrong. Almost everybody else says one or the other, but the Judge never does. If there be a man in the Democratic party who thinks it is wrong, I suggest to him, that his leader don't talk as he does, for he never says that it is wrong.

In the second place, I suggest to him that if he will examine the policy proposed to be carried forward, . . . and he will examine the arguments that are made on it, he will find that every one carefully excludes the idea that there is anything wrong in slavery.

Perhaps that Democrat who says he is as much opposed to slavery as I am, will tell me that I am wrong about this. I wish him to examine his own course in regard to this matter a moment, and then see if his opinion will not be changed a little. Some of you say slavery is wrong but don't you constantly object to anybody else saying so? Do you not constantly argue that this is not the right place to oppose it? You say it must not be opposed in the Free States, because slavery is not here; it must not be opposed in the Slave States, because it is there; it must not be opposed in

politics, because that will make a fuss; it must not be opposed in the pulpit, because it is not religion. Then where is the place to oppose it? There is no suitable place to oppose it. There is no plan in the country to oppose this evil overspreading the continent, which you say yourself is coming.

So I say, again, that in regard to the arguments that are made, when Judge Douglas says he "don't care whether slavery is voted up or voted down," whether he means that as an individual expression of sentiment, or only as a sort of statement of his views on national policy, it is alike true to say that he can thus argue logically if he don't see anything wrong in it; but he cannot say so logically if he admits that slavery is wrong. He cannot say that he would as soon see a wrong voted up as voted down.

When Judge Douglas says that whoever or whatever community wants slaves, they have a right to have them, he is perfectly logical, if there is nothing wrong in the institution; but if you admit that it is wrong, he cannot logically say that anybody has a right to do wrong. When he says that slave property and horse and hog property are alike to be allowed to go into the Territories, upon the principles of equality, he is reasoning truly, if there is no difference between them as property; but if the one is property held rightfully, and the other is wrong, then there is no equality between the right and wrong; so that, turn it in any way you can, in all the arguments sustaining the Democratic policy, and in that policy itself, there is a careful, studied exclusion of the idea that there is anything wrong in slavery.

And I now say that whenever we can get the question distinctly stated, can get all these men who believe that slavery is in some respect wrong, to stand and act with us

in treating it as a wrong, – then, and not till then, I think we will in some way come to an end of this slavery agitation.

Now, having spoken of the Dred Scott decision, one more word, and I am done. Henry Clay, my *beau ideal* of a statesman, the man for whom I fought all my humble life, – Henry Clay once said of a class of men who would repress all tendencies to liberty and ultimate emancipation, that they must, if they would do this, go back to the era of our Independence, and muzzle the cannon which thunders its annual joyous return; they must blow out the moral lights around us; they must penetrate the human soul, and eradicate there the love of liberty; and then, and not till then, could they perpetuate slavery in this country! To my thinking, Judge Douglas is, by his example and vast influence, doing that very thing in this community, when he says that the negro has nothing in the Declaration of Independence. Henry Clay plainly understood the contrary.

Judge Douglas is going back to the era of our Revolution, and to the extent of his ability, muzzling the cannon which thunders its annual joyous return. When he invites any people, willing to have slavery, to establish it, he is blowing out the moral lights around us. When he says he "cares not whether slavery is voted down or voted up," – that it is a sacred right of self-government, – he is, in my judgment, penetrating the human soul and eradicating the light of reason and the love of liberty in this American people. And now I will only say that when by all these means and appliances, Judge Douglas shall succeed in bringing public sentiment to an exact accordance with his own views; when these vast assemblages shall echo back all these sentiments; when they shall come to repeat his views and to avow his principles, and to say all that he says on these mighty questions, – then it needs only the formality

of the second Dred Scott decision, which he endorses in advance, to make slavery alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South.

"On October 16, 1854, at Peoria, I said [as I say now] – we have before us the chief materials enabling us to correctly judge whether the repeal of the Missouri Compromise is right or wrong. I think that it is wrong – wrong in its direct effect, letting slavery into Kansas and Nebraska, and wrong in its prospective principle, allowing it to spread to every part of the wide world . . .

"This *declared* indifference, but, as I must think, covert *real* zeal for the spread of slavery, I cannot but hate. I hate it because of the monstrous injustice of slavery itself. I hate it because it deprives our republican example of its just influence in the world."

The real issue in this campaign is that of right and wrong. That is the issue that will continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between these two principles – right and wrong – throughout the world. They are the two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time, and will ever continue to struggle. The one is the common right of humanity, and the other the "divine right of kings." It is the same principle in whatever shape it develops itself. It is the same spirit that says, "You work and toil and earn bread, and I'll eat it." No matter in what shape it comes, whether from the mouth of a king who seeks to bestride the people of his own nation and live by the fruit of their labor, or from one race of men as an apology for enslaving another race, it is the same tyrannical principle.

## *Rejoinder of Stephen A. Douglas*

BY GEORGE R. FARNUM

LADIES and Gentlemen: Mr. Lincoln attempts to cover up and get over his Abolitionism by telling you that he was raised a little east of you, beyond the Wabash in Indiana, and he thinks that makes a mighty sound and good man of him on all these questions. I do not know that the place where a man is born or raised has much to do with his political principles. The worst Abolitionists I have ever known in Illinois have been men who have sold their slaves in Alabama and Kentucky, and have come here and turned Abolitionists whilst spending the money got for the negroes they sold; and I do not know that an Abolitionist from Indiana or Kentucky ought to have any more credit because he was born and raised among slaveholders. I do not know that a native of Kentucky is more excusable because, raised among slaves, his father and mother having owned slaves, he comes to Illinois, turns Abolitionist, and slanders the graves of his father and mother, and breathes curses upon the institutions under which he was born, and his father and mother bred.

True, I was not born out west here. I was born away down in Yankee land, I was born in a valley in Vermont, with the high mountains around me. I love the old green mountains and valleys of Vermont where I was born, and where I played in my childhood. I went up to visit them

some seven or eight years ago, for the first time for twenty odd years. When I got there they treated me very kindly. They invited me to the Commencement of their college, placed me on the seats with their distinguished guests, and conferred upon me the degree of LL.D. in Latin, the same as they did Old Hickory, at Cambridge, many years ago; and I give you my word of honor I understood just as much of the Latin as he did. When they got through conferring the honorary degree, they called upon me for a speech; and I got up, with my heart full and swelling with gratitude for their kindness, and I said to them, "My friends, Vermont is the most glorious spot on the face of this globe for a man to be born in, *provided* he emigrates when he is very young."

I emigrated when I was very young. I came out here when I was a boy, and I found my mind liberalized, and my opinions enlarged, when I got on these broad prairies, with only the heavens to bound my vision, instead of having them circumscribed by the little narrow ridges that surrounded the valley where I was born. But I discard all flings at the land where a man was born. I wish to be judged by my principles, by those great public measures and constitutional principles upon which the peace, the happiness, and the perpetuity of this Republic now rest.

Mr. Lincoln tries to avoid the main issue by attacking the truth of my proposition, that our fathers made this government divided into Free and Slave States, recognizing the right of each to decide all its local questions for itself. Did they not thus make it? It is true that they did not establish slavery in any of the States, or abolish it in any of them; but finding thirteen States, twelve of which were Slave and one Free, they agreed to form a government uniting them

together as they stood, divided into Free and Slave States, and to guarantee forever to each State the right to do as it pleased on the slavery question. Having thus made the government and conferred this right upon each State forever, I assert that this Government can exist as they made it, divided into Free and Slave States, if any one State chooses to retain slavery. He says that he looks forward to a time when slavery shall be abolished everywhere. I look forward to a time when each State shall be allowed to do as it pleases. If it chooses to keep slavery forever, it is not my business, but its own; if it chooses to abolish slavery, it is its own business, — not mine. I care more for the great principle of self-government, the right of the people to rule, than I do for all the negroes in Christendom. I would not endanger the perpetuity of this Union, I would not blot out the great inalienable rights of the white men, for all the negroes that ever existed.

Hence, I say, let us maintain this Government on the principles that our fathers made it, recognizing the right of each State to keep slavery as long as its people determine, or to abolish it when they please. But Mr. Lincoln says that when our fathers made this Government they did not look forward to the state of things now existing, and therefore he thinks the doctrine was wrong; and he quotes Brooks of South Carolina to prove that our fathers then thought that probably slavery would be abolished by each State acting for itself before this time. Suppose they did; suppose they did not foresee what has occurred, — does that change the principles of our Government? . . . Our fathers, I say, made this Government on the principle of the right of each State to do as it pleases in its own domestic affairs, subject to the Constitution, and allowed the people of each to apply to every new change of circumstances such remedy

as they may see fit to improve their condition. This right they have for all time to come.

Mr. Lincoln went on to tell you that he does not at all desire to interfere with slavery in the States where it exists, nor does his party. I expected him to say that down here. Let me ask him, then, how he expects to put slavery in the course of ultimate extinction everywhere, if he does not intend to interfere with it in the States where it exists? He says that he will prohibit it in all Territories, and the inference is, then, that unless they make Free States out of them he will keep them out of the Union; for, mark you, he did not say whether or not he would vote to admit Kansas with slavery or not, as her people might apply (he forgot that, as usual, etc.); he did not say whether or not he was in favor of bringing the Territories now in existence into the Union on the principle of Clay's Compromise Measures on the slavery question. I told you that he would not. His idea is that he will prohibit slavery in all the Territories, and thus force them all to become Free States, surrounding the Slave States with a cordon of Free States, and hemming them in, keeping the slaves confined to their present limits whilst they go on multiplying, until the soil on which they live will no longer feed them, and he will thus be able to put slavery in a course of ultimate extinction by starvation. He will extinguish slavery in the Southern States as the French general exterminated the Algerines when he smoked them out. He is going to extinguish slavery by surrounding the Slave States, hemming in the slaves, and starving them out of existence, as you smoke a fox out of his hole.

He intends to do that in the name of humanity and Christianity, in order that we may get rid of the terrible crime and sin entailed upon our fathers of holding slaves.

Mr. Lincoln makes out that line of policy, and appeals to the moral sense of justice and to the Christian feeling of the community to sustain him. He says that any man who holds to the contrary doctrine is in the position of the king who claimed to govern by divine right. Let us examine for a moment and see what principle it was that overthrew the divine right of George the Third to govern us. Did not these Colonies rebel because the British Parliament had no right to pass laws concerning our property and domestic and private institutions without our consent? We demanded that the British Government should not pass such laws unless they gave us representation in the body passing them; and this the British Government insisting on doing, we went to war, on the principle that the home Government should not control and govern distant colonies without giving them a representation. Now, Mr. Lincoln proposes to govern the Territories without giving them a representation, and calls on Congress to pass laws controlling their property and domestic concerns without their consent and against their will. Thus, he asserts for his party the identical principle asserted by George III and the Tories of the Revolution.

I ask you to look into these things, and then tell me whether the Democracy or the Abolitionists are right. I hold that the people of a Territory, like those of a State (I use the language of Mr. Buchanan in his letter of acceptance), have the right to decide for themselves whether slavery shall or shall not exist within their limits.

My friends, if, as I have said before, we will only live up to this great fundamental principle, there will be peace between the North and the South. Mr. Lincoln admits that, under the Constitution, on all domestic questions, except slavery, we ought not to interfere with the people of each

State. What right have we to interfere with slavery any more than we have to interfere with any other question? He says that this slavery question is now the bone of contention. Why? Simply because agitators have combined in all the Free States to make war upon it.

Mr. Lincoln tells you that he does not like the Dred Scott decision. Suppose he does not, how is he going to help himself? He says that he will reverse it. How will he reverse it? I know of but one mode of reversing judicial decisions, and that is by appealing from the inferior to the superior court. But I have never yet learned how or where an appeal could be taken from the Supreme Court of the United States! The Dred Scott decision was pronounced by the highest tribunal on earth. From that decision there is no appeal, this side of Heaven. Yet, Mr. Lincoln says he is going to reverse that decision. By what tribunal will he reverse it? Will he appeal to a mob? Does he intend to appeal to violence, to Lynch law? Will he stir up strife and rebellion in the land, and overthrow the court by violence? He does not deign to tell you how he will reverse the Dred Scott decision, but keeps appealing each day from the Supreme Court of the United States to political meetings in the country. He wants me to argue with you the merits of each point of that decision before this political meeting.

I say to you, with all due respect, that I choose to abide by the decisions of the Supreme Court as they are pronounced. It is not for me to inquire, after a decision is made, whether I like it in all the points or not. In relation to Mr. Lincoln's charge of conspiracy against me . . . he prepared that sentence with the greatest care, committed it to memory . . . and now he carries that speech around and reads that sentence to show how pretty it is . . . I have not brought a charge of moral turpitude against him. When he brings one against me . . . instead of disproving it, I

will say it is a lie, and let him prove it if he can. . . . When he dares to attack my moral integrity by a charge of conspiracy between myself, Chief Justice Taney of the Supreme Court, and two Presidents of the United States, I will repel it. When I used to practice law with Lincoln, I never knew him to be beat in a case that he did not get mad at the judge, and talk about appealing, and when I got beat, I generally thought the court was wrong, but I never dreamed of going out of the court house and making a stump speech to the people against the judge, merely because I had found out that I did not know the law as well as he did. If the decision did not suit me, I appealed until I got to the Supreme Court; and then if that court, the highest tribunal in the world, decided against me, I was satisfied, because it is the duty of every law-abiding man to obey the constitution, the laws, and the constituted authorities. He who attempts to stir up odium and rebellion in the country against the constituted authorities, is stimulating the passions of men to resort to violence and to mobs instead of to the law. Hence, I tell you that I take the decisions of the Supreme Court as the law of the land, and I intend to obey them as such.

My friends, I am told that my time is within two minutes of expiring. . . . In conclusion, I desire to return to you my grateful acknowledgments for the kindness and the courtesy with which you have listened to me. It is something remarkable that in an audience as vast as this, composed of men of opposite politics and views, with their passions highly excited, there should be so much courtesy, kindness and respect exhibited, not only toward one another, but toward the speakers; and I feel that it is due to you that I should express my gratitude for the kindness with which you have treated me.